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THE
CHURCH AND ITS CREED:

THE
ADDRESS
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
ANNUAL ASSEMBLY

OF THE

Prince Edward Island Association,

ON MONDAY, THE 20TH JULY,

BY

JOHN KNOX, MODERATOR,

PASTOR OF THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, AUTHOR OF "MORAL
RENOVATION," THE PRIZE ESSAY; "REAL EDUCATION,"
"MISSIONARY EXERTION," &c. &c.

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1857.

Rara temporum felicitas, ubi sentire quæ velis, et quæ
sentias dicere liceat.

Libertas! quæ sera, tamen respexit inertem.

Happy, but extraordinary times, when a man shall be
at liberty both to form his own opinions, and to publish
them with impunity.

Freedom! which came at length, tho' slow to come.

DEDICATION.

To the Members of the First Baptist Church, over whom the Holy Spirit has made me Bishop, to whom I have had the happiness to minister for upwards of fifteen years, and who have been for nearly half a century the unflinching advocates of the all-sufficiency of the DIVINE WORD as the ONLY AUTHORITATIVE CREED of the Church of God—

To the Churches of the Prince Edward Island Association, who acknowledge no Master but CHRIST, and no CREED but His HOLY WORD—

And to all who LOVE TRUTH, PRIZE FREEDOM, and HATE DESPOTISM in every form, in CHURCH and STATE, I subscribe the following Address.

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P R E F A C E .

The following Address was delivered before the Annual Assembly of the Prince Edward Island Association, in Brudenell Chapel, and is now published in accordance with the following vote of the Association.

It was moved by the Rev. John Stevenson, seconded by Malcolm Forbes, Esquire, and passed unanimously: "That the Moderator be requested to furnish a copy of his Annual Address for publication."

The Author esteems it as a privilege to love all who love and obey the Truth *as it is in Jesus*, and he longs and prays for the "perfect day," when the true light shall be so fully received that all shall see clearly and greatly rejoice in its fullness. He has long regarded human creeds as great hindrances to the progress of the truth, by coming between the children of God and the perfect law of liberty, which he conceives to be so plain, that he that runneth may read, and the way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein; and as perfectly adapted, by the Spirit of God, to make the simple wise, and cause all who study it to be wiser than many of their Teachers.

He commends it to the earnest consideration of all who love Christ, and desire to honor Him; and prays that the Great Master may use it as an instrument of exalting His Word, and extending His glory.

Mount Salem, August 17th, 1857.

CHAPTER

and the visitors here will have probably forgotten the
unpleasant scenes I have described, due to the usual in-
conveniences of bad living; we will take the only Harcourt
advice given, not to make general criticisms
and expose individual cases, and only to point out
the singular blessing that education, applied judiciously,
was a blessing to the author of education, and
to the author of the *Education of the Child*.
After the trial of expellement, it was natural enough to
expect that such a trial as this would notendo had
legal proceedings "to follow" but all events
had already run their course before such a trial
had begun, and all, meeting at a meeting of
the trustees and the governors, agreed to absent
and ban him. It was then sent down to the
trustees to ascertain the details, and the whole
matter was left to them, their view being, that as
they had no power to ban him, and as
such an action of his to himself of himself
and nothing of anyone else, the man had only
the right to do as he pleased.
So it followed, because the trustees had agreed
among them to null record of what had been said and done
to him, that they did not even record what had been
done with themselves, but, being all good

men, this language, which was

ANNUAL ADDRESS.

The subjects to which I shall call your attention, at this Annual Assembly of our Churches, are the Constitution and Creed of the Church of Christ. The Word of God is the only source of information on these deeply important matters, as it is the only Revelation of the will of God to man, and contains the teachings of the Saviour and those of the Holy Spirit as written by Inspired Apostles, and delivered to the whole Christian Body, that we "might be perfect, and thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 17.

As Christians, it is alike our duty and our privilege to have clear and scriptural ideas of all matters connected with the kingdom of Christ; and as the testimonies of one age contradict those of another, and the opinions and practices of one class of professing Christians are at variance, on some points, with those of other classes, we go back, beyond a dark and doubtful antiquity, to the very earliest age of the Church, when it was under the immediate superintendence of Inspired Guides, and appeal to the record of the Spirit of Truth, as an infallible standard—the incorruptible Word of the Living God.

In the Acts of the Apostles we see the rise, the principles and the practices of the first Churches under the direction of the Holy Spirit and the preaching of the Apostles; and these early Christian communities are the models after which all the Churches of Christ should be fashioned in every age. Dr. George Campbell, the learned Principal of Marischal College, Aberdeen, and a Presbyterian Professor of Divinity, says in his Lectures on Ecclesiastical History, "That a certain external model of government must have been originally adopted for the more effectual preservation of the Evangelical Institution (the Church) in its native purity, and for the careful transmission of it to after ages." The Apostles preached, baptized them that believed, and formed the disciples into Churches, constituted upon the same principles, possessed of the same privileges, and having the same grand ends to answer in the world, and only such Societies as are constituted after the same Divine model, and aim at the same high results, can have just claims to be recognised as the Churches of Christ. That this rule will condemn the course of every advocate of human systems of religion I readily admit, but the blame rests, with the error on those who make and uphold societies whose organization and polity are at variance with the teaching of the Scriptures and the Apostolic models. Let them cease to be governed by a vain and timid expediency, abandon all fallible stand-

ards, and return to the fountain head of all religious knowledge, to that unerring Word which cannot mislead them, and they will find that perfect organization which preserved the Church amid all the persecutions and perils of the early ages, and learn that the Body of Christ in its constitution, means, and ends, is immutable, in all ages, like its living, exalted and unchanging Head.

The Greek word *ecclesia*, rendered Church, signifies an assembly or congregation, a number of persons called out and gathered into one place. In the classics it is applied to any assembly of the people gathered together on any occasion and for any purpose. The Athenians, assembled to hear Demosthenes declaim against Philip of Macedon, are called an *ecclesia*; and Luke applies the same word, in Acts xix. 32, 39 and 41, to the tumultuous mob in the theatre of Ephesus. In the New Testament the original word occurs one hundred and fifteen times, and it is rendered Church, in our version, one hundred and twelve times, and in the remaining three it is rendered assembly. *It never signifies a place of meeting — a building in which the people assemble, but always the people themselves, both in the Classics and in the Scriptures.* Dr. Cox, an able Presbyterian Minister of New York, in a late number of the *Gene-see Evangelist* thus speaks of the abuse of the word Church.

“What will some of my readers say if I tell them that the word Church is a bad one, apart from its immense perversion and incalculable abuse! It was manufactured by the Schoolmen in the dark ages, and not well translates the original and classic word *ecclesia*. By a licentious metonymy, we now use it commonly and incorrigibly for the container instead of the contained: for the house instead of the people who meet there to worship. In this sense is *ecclesia* used in the New Testament? not once, no! never! I know what I write; and who they are that may scorn and deny it; and I know that I write the truth. The primitive Christians with but few exceptions, had no house of worship, but met in the open air, a side of a mountain, or in a private dwelling. How different from our times of Cathedral magnificence, Architectural extravagance, and sumptuous ecclesiology, worshipping more the gorgeous palace, than even its invisible inhabitant, if He is even morally there.”

The word is used in the New Testament in two senses, the one to signify the whole body of believers or Christ’s universal church; and the other a congregation of faithful persons in which the pure word of God is read, the Gospel preached, and its ordinances regularly observed. In the first sense it is used in Mat. xvi. 18, on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. Paul in the Epistle to the Ephesians says Christ loved the church and gave himself for the church—that He is the head of the church, and that the church is subject to Him. He nourishes the church so as to make it

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a glorious church, that the manifold wisdom of God may be made known through the church unto the principalities and powers in the heavenly places, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord, Eph. iii. 10, 11. This is the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in heaven. Heb. xii. 23. It is the house of God—the body of Christ—the whole family in heaven and earth named after Christ, its living and glorious Head.

It also signifies a particular assembly or congregation of the disciples of Christ, who stately meet in one place to worship God and observe his ordinances, as the Church at Jerusalem, the Church at Antioch, the Church at Corinth, and the Church at Ephesus. It sometimes met in a private house, as the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila, Rom. xvi. 5, the church in the house of Nymphas, Col. iv. 15, and the church in the house of Philemon, 2.

The celebrated John Locke, in his letters on Toleration, says “A church I take to be a voluntary society of men joining themselves of their own accord, in order to the public worshipping of God in such a manner as they judge acceptable to Him, and effectual to the salvation of their own souls.”

The Churches were composed of believers in Jesus, who had received Him as THE CHRIST—the MESSIAH who was to come,—the Saviour of men

and the SON OF THE LIVING GOD, according to the confession of Peter—who died for their sins and rose again for their justification, according to the preaching of Paul—who intelligently believed on Jesus as the Messiah, *with the heart* unto righteousness, took His yoke upon them, and made confession unto Salvation by being baptized *into* Him for the remission of sins—being buried with Him by Baptism into death, and raised up to newness of Life, they bare fruit unto holiness and their end is everlasting life. They looked upon themselves as crucified and dead with Christ to sin and to the world, but alive unto God and to righteousness.—Christ lived in them; they were the beloved of God, and called to be Saints, Rom. i. 7; the temple of God, because the Spirit of God dwelleth in them; the living body of Christ, of which He is the glorious Head. They meet together on the first day of the week, to glorify God in Christ, by observing the ordinances delivered to them, and to edify and comfort one another in love, by mutual instruction and exhortation, and holding forth the word of Life—thus shining as lights in the world.

The great and good Dr. Augustus Neander, Professor of Theology, in the University of Berlin, a most devoted christian, and one of the ablest writers of the age, observes “that the christian church rests on a historic foundation—on the acknowledgement of the fact, that Jesus was the

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Messiah — not on a certain system of ideas. There was only one article of faith which formed the peculiar mark of the christian profession, and from this point believers were led to a clearer and perfect knowledge of the whole contents of the christian faith, by the continual enlightening of the Holy Spirit. Hence Baptism at this period, in its peculiar christian meaning, referred to this one article of faith (Believing that Jesus was the Christ the Son of God) which constituted the essence of christianity, as baptism *into* Jesus, *into* the name of Jesus; it was the holy rite which sealed the connection with Jesus as the Messiah." *

It is also worthy of remark that MANY of these churches are never spoken of as ONE church, as the Church of a province or kingdom, as the Church of England, the Church of Scotland or the Church of Nova Scotia. This is one of the many alterations that men have made by departing from the Divine Model, and following the devices of their own hearts. We read of CHURCHES as the CHURCHES of Macedonia, the CHURCHES of Achaia, the CHURCHES of Galatia, the CHURCHES of Judea, Galilee, and Samaria.

It is urged against this view of the case, but with no show of argument, that the church at

* Training and planting of the Church, Chap. II. published at Berlin, 1832.

Jerusalem was so large that they could not meet in one place, and that consequently it embraced more than one congregation. It is true that 3000 were converted and baptized on the day of Pentecost, and upwards of 2000 soon afterwards; but it should be remembered that many of these were strangers in Jerusalem, who had come from all parts of Asia, Mesopotamia, Parthia, Cappadocia and Judea to keep the feast of Pentecost, and who in due time removed to their own provinces and cities. Dr. Bloomfield, an Episcopalian, in his critical notes on the Greek Testament on **Acts v. 12—14**, says that ALL the disciples met in the Temple, in Solomon's Porch, as their number was so great that the upper room had become too small for them. That Porch must have been very large, for 2000 of the hearers were converted during the delivery of one sermon in that place; see **Acts iii. 11**, and **iv. 4**. Even the learned Vicar of Bisbrooke acknowledges that all the disciples, that is the whole Church, met in the Portico of the Temple of Jerusalem. The Inspired Writer informs us that they "continued daily with one accord in the Temple." The whole church met at the great Gentile controversy. The "twelve called the multitude of the disciples to them." The church at Corinth came together to ONE PLACE; and the church at Antioch came together in ONE ASSEMBLY, to hear Paul and Silas give an account of their mission. **Acts, xiv. 27.**

The letters addressed by the apostles to the Churches at Rome, at Corinth, and at Ephesus, prove that the church did not meet in a presbytery, synod, General assembly or convention; for the letters in such a case would have been addressed *to the body*, and there is no hint given of the existence of such organizations.

The ablest authorities on Ecclesiastical polity confirm the view which we have just given, even when their testimony is contrary to their own practice. The writings of the early fathers, and the testimony of the ablest historians, prove the correctness of our remarks.

Polycarp, a Pastor of the Church at Smyrna, when seized by his murderers in A. D. 166, prays "for the universal Church throughout the world." Irenæus, his pupil, and a bishop of the church at Lyons, speaks of the "Church dispersed throughout the whole world to the ends of the earth." Dionysius Alexandrinus calls the Emperor Macrianus, a "Warrior against the Catholic or universal Church of God;" and Origen, one of the most eloquent Fathers of the 2d century, speaks of the Church of God under heaven.

We find them employing the term in the second sense also. Dionysius Alexandrinus says, the "CHURCHES of *Celicia*." Irenæus speaks of the CHURCHES that were in Germany, France and Spain. Tertullian writes of the "CHURCHES of Asia and Phrygia," and of the "CHURCHES of Greece."

When the church at Smyrna wrote an account of the martyrdom of Polycarp, one of their Bishops, to the church at Philomelios, they begin: "The church of God dwelling at Smyrna to the church dwelling at Philomelios." So the epistle of Clemens Romanus to the church at Corinth, which Eusebius styles a great, admirable and powerful writing, is written in the name of the "church of God which dwelleth at Rome to the church of God which dwelleth at Corinth." Lord Chancellor King, in his "Inquiry into the Constitution and Discipline of the Primitive Church," testifies as the result of his laborious investigation, that "the usual and common acceptation of the word Church, is that of a society of Christians meeting together in one place, under their proper pastors, for the performance of religious worship, and the exercise of christian discipline." Dr. Isaac Barrow, Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and one of the most learned scholars of his day, says that "at first, each church was settled apart under its own officers, so as independently and separately to manage its own concerns;" and Dr. Kaye, bishop of Bristol, in his Ecclesiastical History, declares that "the passages already alleged sufficiently prove that in Tertullian's estimation, the apostolic churches were independent of each other, and equal in rank and degree."

EACH CHURCH IS ENTIRELY INDEPENDENT; accountable to no other church for any part of its action,

and its decisions are independent of every tribunal on earth, — being responsible to Jesus Christ, its infallible and living Head alone, to whom every one must give an account, and whom God has appointed the Judge of the living and the dead.

In the Epistles to the seven churches of Asia, no one church is blamed or applauded for any thing bad or good in any other church, but each is addressed as a separate and independent body. They were near each other. Philadelphia, Thyatira and Sardis were cities of Natolia, and belonged to one province. Sardis was 40 miles from Smyrna; and the neighboring churches of Galatia, Phrygia, Pontus and Cappadocia are not once named in these epistles. Each church is addressed as if there were no other church in existence but itself, and held as responsible as if all power were vested in those who constituted the church.

The first public business of the church, after our Lord's ascension, was the election of a brother to fill up the place of Judas, who had gone to his own place; and this choice was made, not by the apostles, but by the whole brotherhood. Chrysostom's exposition of this passage, as confirmed by Cyprian, shows us the light in which the early Christians regarded this matter. "Peter," says he, "did every thing here with the common consent; nothing by his own will and authority. He left the judgment to the multitude, to secure the greater respect to the elected, and to free himself

from every invidious reflection. They appointed two; he did not himself appoint them, — it was the act of ALL." *

The election of Deacons, recorded in Acts vi, 1—7, was effected by the united vote of the whole church. The apostles proposed the election of seven Deacons; the whole multitude were favorable to the matter, and chose the seven, whom the apostles inducted into office by the laying on of hands. Dr. Owen justly observes that "it is impossible that there should be a more evident convincing instance and example of the free choice of ecclesiastical officers by the multitude or fraternity of the church, than is given us herein. Nor was there any ground or reason why this order and process should be observed,— why the apostles would not themselves nominate and appoint persons whom they saw and knew meet for this office to receive it, but that it was the right and liberty of the people, according to the mind of Christ, to choose their own officers, which they would not abridge or infringe."

So clearly is this election of Deacons the act of the whole Christian brotherhood, that even Cardinal Bellarmine does not attempt to deny that it was by the vote of the people; but, with his characteristic acuteness and sophistry, he argues that as this was a matter relating to temporal affairs, it cannot be pleaded as a precedent to the people.

* *Hom. ad locum, T. ix, p. 25.*

in their election of Bishops or Elders to take care of their souls.

The brother who travelled with Paul was chosen by the church — 2 Cor., viii, 9. Neander remarks, "Inasmuch as the apostles submitted the appointment of the deacons to the vote of the church, and that of the delegates who should accompany them in the name of the churches, we may infer that a similar course was pursued also in the appointment of elders." Mosheim entirely agrees with Neander in the opinion that the elders of the primitive church were elected by the suffrages of the people, and not by the apostles, because of their prudence in submitting the election of one to fill up the vacancy in their own number, and in the appointment of guardians for the poor.

In 1 Cor., v, 3—5, the apostle commits the matter to the whole church. "Do ye not judge them that are within" — that is, church members. In

Cor., ii, 6, he speaks of excommunication as the act of the church, — the punishment inflicted *of many*. He *beseeches* them to restore him. Even an apostle *does not command* a church. Zwingle, the learned and fearless Reformer of Zurich, in Switzerland, says "if we look thoroughly at the words of Christ in the 18th of Matthew, we shall find him only to be excommunicated whom the common consent of that church in which the man dwelleth hath shut out."

To the whole church belonged the appointment of officers, of expelling and receiving members into their fellowship. Origen, in his comment on Matthew, describes an offender appearing before the whole church. Clemens Romanus calls the censures of the church "things commanded by the congregation." Two offending sub-deacons and Acolyth, at Carthage, were tried before the whole people. When Felicissimus caused a schism at Carthage, the matter was debated by, and decided according to the will and consent of the people. Even bishops were deposed by the people. Martialis and Basilides, two Spanish bishops, were deserted by their parishes, and the people elected Felix and Sabinus bishops in their stead. The two forsaken bishops, after their deposition, claimed the exercise of episcopal authority; but the people would not allow it, and appealed to a synod of bishops, which met in A. D. 258, of which Cyprian was president. The synod approved of and commended the proceedings of the people, declaring that they were according to the Divine law.*

The excommunicated can be restored only by the consent of the church. Paul writes to the church at Corinth as if they had power to restore the offender to their fellowship. Cyprian says, they were to plead their cause before all the people (Epist. 10, p. 30); and that none should be

* King's Prim. Ch., p. 89.

* Ad

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restored to the church without being examined before them, and being judged by them.*

An African synod decided "that none should be received into the church's peace, without the knowledge and consent of the people." Dr. Geo. Campbell, of Aberdeen, in his Ecclesiastical History, justly observes that "it is certain, as appears by the epistles of Cyprian, that for the three first ages of the church, no final resolution was taken on any affair of moment, without communicating it to the people and obtaining their approbation. Lord Chancellor King, in his Primitive Church, furnishes ample evidence that all church matters were considered, judged and decided by the whole congregation, as Cyprian wrote to the people, and his colleagues "*all affairs, as their mutual honour did require, should be debated in common by them.*" Dr. Wall, a distinguished Episcopalian writer and a high minded Churchman, in writing about the Baptists, says, "They (the Baptists) do in the disputes which they hold with people of the Church of England, frequently urge, that this, their way, viz: for the people to have their vote in the choice of church officers in the most regular way; as being that which was used by the Primitive Church." This, says the Doctor, "is a piece of history which cannot fairly be denied;" **AND THOSE CHRISTIANS WHO HAVE GONE ABOUT TO MEND THIS WAY, HAVE MADE IT MUCH WORSE." †**

* *ad plebem.* Epist. 12, p. 37.

† Wall's Hist. Inf. Baptism, Part 2, page 278. Edit. 1705.

Bishop Lowth, in his treatise on Church power, acknowledges that the people voted in the choice of their Bishops, and that "it can be only ignorance and folly that pleads the contrary." Cyprian declares "that he was chosen Bishop by all the people" (see his Epistles); and Pontius records this fact in *vita Cypriani*.

The present learned Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Whately, remarks, "though there was one Lord and one Baptism for all of these (churches) yet they were each a distinct, independent community on earth, united by the common principles on which they were founded by their mutual agreement, affection and respect; but not having any one recognised head on earth, or acknowledging any sovereignty of any one of these Societies over others." And the profound and erudite Barrow says, at first "every church was settled apart under its own Bishops or Presbyters, so as independently and separately to manage its own affairs." Each "individual church assumed to itself the forms and rights of a little distinct republic or commonwealth."* Riddle says "all churches were independent of each other, but were united by the bonds of holy charity, sympathy and friendship." But while "all churches were in the first ages of christianity united in one bond of love and faith, and were ready to promote each others interests, yet with

* Mosheim.

regard to Government and internal economy, every individual church considered itself as an independent community, none of them exercising or recognising any sort of external influence or authority. Neither in the New Testament nor in any ancient document whatever do we find any thing recorded from which it might be inferred that any of the smaller churches were at all dependent on, or looked up for direction to those of greater magnitude or consequence." Such is the testimony of Dr. Mosheim the learned Chancellor of the University of Gottingen, one of the most elaborate writers of his day, and the author of upwards of 150 works. All the churches of Christ, formed according to the Model recorded in the New Testament, are perfectly competent to manage all their own affairs, and to observe all the ordinances of Christ, each one of them as lawfully as if there were no other christian community on earth. Any departure from this principle will introduce an element into the christian body which will ultimately corrupt it by subverting its privileges, destroying its freedom, and defeating the grand purpose of its organization. The Hudson River Baptist Association held at Yonkers, New York State, in June 1854, passed the following Resolutions on this subject :

- I. That every Gospel Church is intrusted with certain laws laid down in the New Testament for the guidance and government of her members.

II. That every action of such a Church in the exercise of those laws is *valid and final*, insomuch that it CANNOT BE RIGHTFULLY REVERSED BY ANY OTHER BODY ON EARTH.

But while each church is entirely independent of all similar institutions, yet they may lawfully unite in any assembly for a *benevolent effort* that their circumstances may warrant, and that the wants of the world around them may demand. One individual church can do comparatively little for the cause of Christ; and as union is strength either for good or evil, it may be expected that the contributions and collective wisdom of the many, duly enlightened and influenced by Divine Grace, will accomplish much in diffusing the glorious Gospel and extending and establishing the Kingdom of our common Lord.

Such assemblies meet not to legislate, for Christ is the King in Zion and the one rightful Legislator in his Church;—not to interfere with each other's liberties, but to encourage each other in the ways of peace, and to provoke each other to the increased exercise of christian love and the production of the works of Righteousness which by Jesus Christ are to the honour and the praise of God. They meet for the purposes of instruction and friendly counsel and deliberation;—to devise the best means of offering united effort for the destruction of existing evil, and advancing the Empire of Righteousness in the world.

Councils to legislate for the churches were unknown in the primitive ages: "It can not indeed even be made probable from testimony, human or Divine, that in this age it was the practice of several churches to enter into and maintain among themselves that sort of association which afterwards came to subsist among the churches of almost every province. No vestige of these councils appear before the middle of the second century, and when they did appear they changed nearly the whole form of the church, for by them in the first place the ancient rights and privileges of the people were very much abridged, and on the other hand, the influence and authority of the Bishops were not a little augmented."*

There is not one thing of which christian churches should be more anxious to preserve unsullied and unimpaired, than the glory of their Head, their entire dependence on Him, and their complete independence of one another. By overlooking these, the delegates of the Churches, after the 2d century, gradually assumed the character of Legislators, and enacted laws to fix the faith and practice of the Christian communities. They forgot that the "Elders of the Church which were ordained in every city and over every church were the *servants* and not the lords of the churches."† Even the apostles call

* Mosheim.

† Neander.

themselves the servants of the churches for Jesus' sake, 2 Cor. iv, 5. "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake."

Even after these councils had become common among the great mass of the Western Churches, many churches in Asia and Africa declined entering into these grand confederacies, preferring to retain their independence unimpaired and unchallenged, rather than risk it by such associations. It is just, however, to remark that these councils were begun with good intentions, and when the Bishops met in them at their beginning, they claimed no more than a seat in them as delegates of the churches. But they soon put forth greater pretensions and assumed a loftier tone, and ultimately claimed to be the **SUCCESSORS OF THE APOSTLES**, and demanded submission and obedience from the people, who were required to surrender their rights, judgment and privileges to an order of men who claimed to be the divinely appointed *ambassadors of Christ* and the **ONLY AUTHORIZED** rulers in His Church. The clergy, as they call themselves, found it to their advantage among the ignorant and thoughtless, to forward and support these assumptions, and even the light of the 19th century makes manifest, in certain quarters, this living libel upon education and civilization—the monstrous progeny of superstition, despotism and anti-christ. It makes our

membership of the Church of Christ depend upon a *pretended* personal succession from the Apostles, according to certain forms and administrative usages on the part of the Ministers of the churches, so that our union with Christ and our Eternal Salvation depend upon the pedigree of the particular Minister under whose instructions we sit,—the Sacramental virtue of whose "*Holy Orders*" is derived from the hands of the Bishop who placed them on his head at ordination. The opinion that an inherent sacramental virtue is conveyed by imposition of hands, from one man to another, and thus makes his official acts valid, is a silly pretence and a wicked, abominable and dangerous falsehood, which destroys the very constitution of a Church, by exalting the pretended power of its officers, and affects to put all beyond the pale of the true church, and beyond the reach of salvation, who do not submit to their groundless, juggling and anti-christian assumptions. They pretend to embody, what they call, the power of the church in their own persons, received by the laying on of hands, as if the whole Universal Church had assembled and chosen this particular minister to be the sole executor of its laws, and withdrawing its allegiance from Christ its only Head, had legally transferred it to the hands of this poor perishing, but ambitious tabernacle of clay—self-styled successor of the Apostles. This idea is

based by some on 2 Tim. ii, 2. where the apostle tells Timothy to commit a certain deposit to faithful men who shall be able to teach others also. The English reader may see the folly of building any such pretensions on this passage.— Timothy is not told to commit any authority or power to these men ; but TRUTH, THINGS which he had HEARD among many witnesses ; — the doctrines of the Gospel of Christ, that they might be able to *teach* others. The original word is *parathou* from *paratithemi*, and signifies to lay before, to teach, to set clearly before one, (Mat. xiii, 24—31) to establish by evidence, opening and alleging, as in Acts xvii, 3.* Dr. Adam Clarke on this passage says, “ These truths are still continued in the Church, and there are still faithful ministers who proclaim them. But where is the uninterrupted apostolic succession? Who can tell? All the pretensions to it by certain churches, are as stupid as they are idle and futile. He who appeals to this as his authority as a Christian Minister, had best sit down till he has made it out ; and this will be by the next Greek Kalends.”

It is agreed on all sides that the Apostleship was an office of an extraordinary character ; and the most strenuous advocates of the High-Church uninterrupted-succession scheme, are compelled to

* Schleusner and Wahl render *parathou* in 2 Tim .ii, 2. as teaching and proving. See Rose's Parkhurst.

the apostle deposit to each others the folly of passage.— Authority or s which he — the doc- y might be rd is *para-* lay before, (Mat. xiii, opening and Adam Clarke are still con- still faithful where is the Who can tell? churcches, are . He who a Christian has made it next Greek

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acknowledge that the Apostles in their character and office of extraordinary messengers, *had no successors*. That the Apostles were ordinary Ministers, as well as extraordinary messengers, I nowhere read in the word of God; so that the establishment of ministerial prerogative and rule upon Apostolic precedent, cannot but be regarded as both unwarranted and unnecessary — as unwarranted, because the Apostles were not ordinary ministers; they were disciples or learners of Christ, and his divinely commissioned messengers to the world, specially consecrated and miraculously endowed for the great work of propagating Christianity, and establishing and setting in order the churches to be gathered out from among men through their instrumentality — and as unnecessary, as the character, qualifications, duties and privileges of the Christian Minister are clearly defined and fully insisted on in the Apostolic epistles.

The idea of personal succession, appears so ridiculous that I am at a loss to account for the strange infatuation of those who profess to believe it. Who can believe that men are called of God to fill offices in his church, who are not only unfit to discharge their duties, but some of them possessed of characters the very reverse of those required by the Word of God? In every thing in nature there is adaptation, but in this there is nothing but unmixed repulsion! In the New

Testament there is nothing of this succession scheme, and the advocates of the heresy make no appeal either to reason or Scripture. No wonder that Bishop Stillingfleet should say "and must the traditions of the church be our rule to interpret Scripture by ? An excellent way to find out the truth, doubtless, to bend the rule to the crooked stick ; to make the judge stand to the opinion of his lacquey, what sentence he shall pass upon the cause in question ; to make Scripture stand up in hand to tradition, to know whether it may have leave to speak or not ; are all the outcries of apostolic tradition, of personal succession, of unquestionable records resolved at last into the Scripture itself by him (Eusebius) from whom all these long pedigrees are fetched ? Then let succession know its place, and learn to *vail bonnet* to the Scriptures ; and withal let men take heed of over-reaching themselves, when they would bring down so large a catalogue of single Bishops from the first and purest time of the church ; for it will be hard for others to believe them, when EUSEBIUS — *from whom they are taken* — PROFESSETH IT SO HARD TO FIND THEM. "

The present Bishop of South Carolina denies that the Bishops of the Protestant Episcopal Church are the successors of the apostles ; and affirms that they had " no successors, and were not intended to have any. It was not the nature

of their office to have any successors." From a leading editorial of the *Protestant Churchman*, of which Dr Ting and Dr Anthon are the able editors, we take the following remarks on this avowal of Bishop Davis:

"When will there be boldness and light in our church sufficient to stand upon the high platform which Bishop Davis has gained, and to cast this figment of salvation through an Apostolic succession forever away? It is a modern pretence, and the farther back you go the less are you able to find any foundation or countenance for it. The Church of England never knew or heard it till Bancroft started it, and Laud encouraged and cherished it in the seventeenth century. The non-juring Bishops found it convenient, and made it a familiar war-cry. The little Episcopal body of Scotland perceived its importance as their only claim in that land of ministers and churches. The Oxford sect have lately dug it up again in England, where it had been buried long—we had hoped forever. And imitative Americans immediately imported it with the other congeries of European fashions and forms. It has been a "passion rather than a principle" here. But it has gained such extent of dominion and influence, that moderate men opposing it, have been silenced by the violence of its cry, and feeble men have sought its support as a prop by which their emptiness may be sustained and concealed. Wiser

men have sometimes been caught for a season by its assumptions and assertions; crafty men have seized it as an instrument of power; and our church has been made a reproach and a gazing stock by the extravagance of the claims which, under its influence, have been propounded by men whose other claims for respect were least of all to be regarded. We confidently hope that this dark period is rapidly passing away; and we hail such testimonies as Bishop Davis has given us as orient springs of a better time approaching, when notions shall yield to truth, and sectarian bitterness shall be absorbed in the universal spread of love for the Gospel, love for the church of Christ, love for every one who bears His image, love for all those who love Him in sincerity."

When Episcopal Bishops and Doctors of the Church of England pour such contempt upon this miserable succession mummery, we need not be surprised that Dr John Owen, the great non-conformist, should describe it as "taking away the living creature, and setting up his skin stuffed with straw in its stead." The true succession is not outward and ceremonial, but inward and spiritual; it is a succession of apostolic doctrine, of spiritual life, and of holy action. And herein is the grand distinction between traditionism and christianity. The possession of the true faith, the right spirit, and an obedient and holy life, proves that we are the true church and the ministers of

God ; while the absence of these, and the presence of any thing else, determine all claims to such pretensions to be false. If any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of His ; "and he that doeth not righteousness is not of God." The doctrine and character make the church, not the church the doctrine.

In scripture, we find the election of the officers of the church essential to true ordination, and *all ministers ordained without such election on the part of the body, are not scripturally ordained, and consequently are not true ministers of Christ.* Ministers of men and made by men, they may be, but true ministers of Christ they cannot be, unless called of God, (that is in the way which he has appointed,) as was Aaron. All these pretended successors of the Apostles are ordained without the choice or the voice of the people, so that they are all wrong—a race of impostors. The Apostles, as Archbishop Whately says, were "Witnesses of the Resurrection, Dispensers of Miraculous Gifts, and Inspired Oracles of Divine Revelation, and have no successors." But who are these who claim to be their successors, but who have never seen the Lord ; who are not inspired, and dare not pretend to be ; and who have none of their gifts ? Who are they ?—but **SILLY FOOLS OR BOLD IMPOSTORS !**

But they claim to be the only regularly ordained ministers and the only authorized rulers of the

Church; and they base these claims, not on the authority of the church, but on the figment of pretended succession from the apostles. They look upon themselves as a distinct class from common believers in the church, and arrogate to themselves peculiar privileges. This lays the foundation for their distinct interests, and prevents that oneness of mind and effort which are essential to growing piety and successful exertion. The church with its officers are ONE, for the ministers are members of the church and equally subject to its discipline. Did any one ever hear of Deacons not being members of the church, or not being subject to discipline equally with private members? And who are ministers but officers as truly as deacons, and equally members of the christian community. The church is an executive body and transacts its own business and appoints its own officers, so that the power of ordination is vested in itself and not in the ministers of other churches, as is generally believed. If it be maintained that it is vested in the ministers, it would instruct me much to be informed of the source from which they derived it. If it be answered that they received it from their predecessors in the ministry, then here we have apostolic succession as clearly as in the writings of our Oxford Tractmen—the puseyites. If the power of ordination be vested in the ministers of the churches, then an uninterrupted suc-

cession is necessary to constitute it valid ; and wherever any irregularity has existed, the succession and the validity are lost together. That circumstances may possibly occur in which a person may be validly invested with the ministerial office by the unanimous vote of the people, as has been maintained by Bishop Burnet and others, is entirely at variance with this view of the case ; for ordination is vested in the ministry or it is vested in the church. If it be vested in the ministry, then it is essential that it be transmitted by them ; and without such transmission there can be no valid ordination. The idea that extraordinary circumstances will empower a society of people to do that which the wisdom of God has ordained to be done only by a certain distinct and authorized order, is repugnant to common sense, and entirely opposed to the nature of things. Circumstances may alter *cases*, but they never can alter PRINCIPLES.

It is no doubt very humbling to ministerial pride to acknowledge that they are only officers of the church of which they are members, and that in that capacity only they derive power from the particular church to which they belong, to act on their behalf, and as their leaders. The claims of the christian ministry are based entirely on this Scriptural organism, the christian church ; and on this fact it rests all its merits as a Divine Institution. So that the ministry grows out of,

and rests on the Church. The people can choose a king and appoint any one of their fellow subjects to crown him and thus make him a king, but no king can make a king for any nation without the choice of the nation and his appointment by the people to that service. Samuel was not a king, yet he annointed Saul, and David was made king over Israel by the people; — they made him king. — So it is with the Church. Every individual christian church has the right to choose and appoint their own officers, but they have no authority to appoint officers for any other christian society. In Acts xiv, 23, it is said they ordained Elders in every church. Now the original word (*Cheirotonesantes*) rendered ordained, signifies chosen or constituted by a show of hands. Hammond, Whitby and the other advocates of ministerial power, render this word appointed; and some of them refer us to Mark. iii, 14. where it is said that Christ appointed or "ordained twelve." Now it happens that the word here is not *Cheirotoneo* but *epoiese*, which is very properly rendered made, in Rev. i, 6; and is often used in this sense by the later classic writers. The learned Erasmus, Calvin, Beza, Sir Norton Knatchbull and many others render *cheirotoneo* to appoint to office by the votes of the church.

That it does not mean imposition of hands, is evident from the word employed; for *cheirotheteo* would have been used which signifies to lay on

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hands. In 2 Cor. viii, 19, we are informed that the brother who travelled with the apostle was appointed by the stretched out hands of the church, that is by vote—a show of hands. *Cheirotonethis* is the word employed, and is rendered chosen in our version.

The learned Zonarus in his Scholia on the Apostolic Canon, says “anciently the choice or suffrage was called *Cheirotonia*; for when it was lawful for the multitude in their cities to choose their Priests or Bishops, they met together, and some chose one man, and some another; but that it might appear whose suffrage won, the electors did stretch forth their hands, and by their hands thus stretched forth or up, they were numbered, who chose the one, and who the other.” In the 4th Book of the Coptic Collection of Ordinances of the Church of Alexandria, it is written as a law that “Bishops were to be chosen by all the people.” And in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians we read “ye ought as a church of God to ordain your Bishop by the stretching forth of the hand.”

It was customary to lay hands on any person appointed to a particular work. Moses laid his hands on Joshua his successor. Xenophon says that Abradates laid his hands on the head of Parthia his wife, and prayed “O great Jupiter grant me to appear worthy of such a wife, and of such a friend as Cyrus.”*

* Cyro Inst. Edit. Hutchin. London 8vo 1765. p. 360.

When the Apostles laid on hands they sometimes conveyed spiritual gifts, as in the case of the brethren in Samaria who were converted through the preaching of Philip and baptized by him, but who did not receive the gift of the Holy Spirit till the Apostles came down from Jerusalem and imparted this gift by the laying on of hands. Paul laid his hands upon certain disciples at Ephesus, and they received the Holy Ghost and spake with tongues and prophesied **Acts xix, 6.** So Timothy, when ordained by the elders of the church at Lystra, received a gift at the same time by the laying on of the hands of the Apostle Paul. Compare **Acts xvi, 1—4,** with **1 Tim. iv, 14,** and **2 Tim. i, 6.** It was given *with* the laying on of the hands of the Presbytery —*by* the laying on of my hands.

When the first Deacons were ordained, the Apostles laid their hands on them, not to impart spiritual gifts, for they were already full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom, but to designate them to office. When Barnabas and Saul were sent by the Holy Spirit, to the Gentiles, the Church at Antioch fasted and prayed and laid their hands on them, thus solemnly separating them to this work. This was not ordaining them to preach, for they were already teachers in the church at Antioch, **Acts xiii, 1.** and had been preaching to that church for one whole year (**xi, 26**), but simply appointing them to a particular

work, which when they had fulfilled, they rehearsed to the church at Antioch on their return, Acts xiv, 26, 27. The act of laying on of hands is solemn and impressive, and was practised at the ordination of Deacons, Elders and Missionaries to their work.

It is spoken of as one of the first principles of the doctrines of Christ, Heb. vi, 2.

Some able High Church advocates are of the opinion that the ordination mentioned in Acts xiv, 23, is somewhat different from the formal Ecclesiastical ordination of a later date. They do not attempt to deny that it is the Ordination of Apostolic times; but they maintain *that it is not that of a later period*, which had become a more *formal affair*, on account of believers having been divided into two separate classes, the Clergy and the Laity. Now observe that the ordination was made a more formal service after the apostolic age; christians thought themselves wiser than the apostles whom God had inspired with supernatural wisdom, and endeavoured to improve the plan that the Holy Spirit recorded for their imitation; so they revised and amended it by such additions as dividing the church into two classes, the Clergy and the Laity, and robbing the church of the power of Ordination, and conferring it upon the class which they had rendered distinct and superior, together with such ceremonies as would make it a more formal affair.

Upon what authority these changes were made, they do not inform us; but they tell us *they thought it expedient*. If the learned reader will consult Dr. Bloomfield's Critical Notes on the Greek Testament, he will find that I have given my High Clerical friends ample justice.

Every christian church thus possesses all the power within itself to observe all the ordinances of Christ, and to choose and appoint all its officers, and to remove them from office when they believe such to be the mind of Christ, their sole King and Head. Archbishop Whately regards the opposite idea as not only absurd but even *impious*; and Dr. Martin Luther the great German Reformer entertained a similar opinion. "If any pious laymen were in a desert, and having no regularly consecrated priest among them, were to agree to choose for that office one of their number, married or unmarried, this man would be as truly a priest, as if he had been consecrated by all the bishops in the world. Augustine, Ambrose and Cyprian were chosen in this manner. Hence it follows that laity and priests, princes and bishops, or as they say Clergy and Laity, have in reality nothing to distinguish them but their functions."*

Luther and Archbishop Whately both believed that all power was in the Church, who had the power to constitute any of its members its officers, to discharge any duty to which it might appoint

* Luth. Oper. lib. xvii, f. 457.

them. Elder John Stevenson, the senior pastor of the New Glasgow Church in this Island, was thus ordained by the church with fasting and prayer, according to the recorded apostolic practice, Acts xvi, 23; and it is rather singular that a Nova Scotia Baptist Minister refused to acknowledge him as a regular pastor because he had not been ordained by the imposition of ministerial hands. He had preached in his meeting house on the Lord's day morning; but he refused to commune with him, because he looked upon him as not qualified to administer the Lord's Supper, but he offered to do so if Elder Stevenson would allow him to administer that ordinance. Here is a Baptist Minister who refuses to acknowledge a Pastor whom the Archbishop of Dublin, Luther the great Reformer, Dr. John Owen, Bishop Burnet, and all enlightened Divines of every name would acknowledge as a true Minister of Christ. What will this little aspirant to apostolic succession honors think when I inform him that the first Baptist Minister that was ordained in these Provinces, over the first Baptist Church in Nova Scotia, was never ordained by any regularly ordained Elder or Deacon. That Church is the Horton Church, over which Nicholas Pearson was ordained Pastor in 1778, by Benj. Kinsman, a private member of the church, who was afterwards ordained a deacon, after he had ordained brother Pearson an Elder. This is the

fountain head of Nova Scotia Baptist Apostolic succession.

The Rev. Robert Hall, the eminent Baptist Minister of Cambridge, Leicester and Bristol, one of the most extraordinary men that ever adorned the annals of any age or country, the friend of Dr. Parr, Sir James M'Intosh and Dr. Olinthus Gregory, a profound philosopher and the most distinguished pulpit orator in Europe, remarkable alike for his grandeur of conception and splendid eloquence, this able, gifted and popular pastor was ordained in the same simple and scriptural manner as brother Stevenson of the New Glasgow Church in this Island. From the records of the Baptist Church at Arnsby it appears that "the members of the church, after cautious and deliberate inquiry, unanimously requested that Robert Hall, Junior, might be set apart to public employ."

The Church Book further testifies, that on the 13th day of August, 1780, Robert Hall was examined by his father before the church, respecting his inclinations, motives and end, in reference to the Ministry, and was likewise desired to make a declaration of his religious sentiments. All which being done to the entire satisfaction of the Church, THEY THEREFORE SET HIM APART BY LIFTING UP THEIR RIGHT HANDS, AND BY SOLEMN PRAYER."

Such was the ordination of the great Robert Hall, whose ministry at Cambridge was attended by such numbers of the Graduates, Tutors and

Fellows of the Colleges of the University, that the "heads of houses" were alarmed, and a meeting was called to prevent the irregularity. Dr. Mansel, Master of Trinity College and afterwards Bishop of Bristol, opposed the measure, and declared "that he admired and revered Mr. Hall for his talents and his genuine liberality; and that if he were not Master of Trinity he should certainly attend often himself; and that even now he had experienced a severe struggle, before he could make up his mind to relinquish so great a benefit."*

Who but deluded successionists ever questioned the validity of Robert Hall's ordination? The whole evangelical christian world would look with pity and commiseration upon the man who would presume to throw any reflection upon the ministerial character of one so eminently gifted and successful as an able Minister of the New Testament; whose works are a lasting monument of his piety and genius; and whose sentiments, Politicians and Divines of every class endorse with satisfaction and honor! The *validity* of his ministerial standing depends upon the *scripturalness* of his ordination; his *efficiency* as a minister was owing to the depth of his piety, the extent and accuracy of his knowledge, the superiority of his talents, and his earnest diligence in conse-

* Life by Olinthus Gregory, LL.D., F.R.A.S.

erating all to the service of Christ, and the good of the church.

It is much easier to wander from the right track than to return to it again, and one solitary wanderer begins a path in which others may follow until a beaten high way is formed, along which multitudes follow to destruction. Robert Hall says of churches, "that their officers were chosen by themselves, the people, in the first ages, is incontrovertibly evident, as well from scripture as from the authentic monuments of antiquity. The transfer of power, first from the people to their ministers, and afterwards from them to the Bishop of Rome, was a gradual work, not fully accomplished till many centuries had elapsed from the christian era."*

When the Secession Church separated from the Church of Scotland, the seceding Ministers were deposed by the church courts; but as they had the voice of their people, they looked upon that as sufficiently Scriptural authority to preach. The Burgers were deposed and deprived of all authority to preach and administer church ordinances by the Anti-Burgers; but as the Burgers possessed the confidence of their own congregations and had their approval to preach and enforce church discipline as usual, they continued their ministry as if no such deposition had taken place. They regarded all power to confer authority to

* Hall's Works, vol. 2, p. 263.

preach and administer ordinances, as residing in the particular congregations over which they were placed and with which they were connected; and though deprived by the Church Courts of this right, they looked upon the call of the people as Scriptural authority.

The Rev. Pharcellus Church, D. D., one of the most distinguished Baptist Ministers in America, the author of the Prize Essay on Christian Benevolence, Antioch, &c, and editor of the New York Chronicle, says in an editorial of last year, "On the whole, we rather lean to the opinion that Baptist churches, in their ordination services, are too independent. Otherwise they would not act independent of the Scriptures, and of primitive example, but would adopt the early and scriptural practice of "fasting and prayer," with "the laying on of hands." Our opposition to present usages, then, is not that we think them at variance with church independence, or that they have a leaning towards apostolic succession, but because we think the scriptural way by far the most appropriate and profitable one, and fear that at present we are leaning away from what is apostolic rather than towards it."

The Dr. thinks the churches are becoming too independent of scripture, and recommends a return to the primitive plan by the churches, of fasting, praying and laying on of hands, instead of great assemblies of many ministers and imposing cere-

monies. The latter he looks upon as modern and artificial, the former as scriptural and apostolic.

It would be well if the advocates of this succession scheme would weigh well the speech of the Archbishop of York in the House of Lords, during the debate of the year 1558. The Archbishop's reasoning was "that if the Church of England withdrew from the Church of Rome, she would by that directly forsake and fly from all general councils; and he proceeded to prove that the first four councils of Nice, Constantinople, Ephesus and Chalcedon had acknowledged the supremacy of Rome. He then presented to their view this alternative for consideration. Either the Church of Rome is a true or a false one. If she be a true church, then we will be guilty of schism in leaving her, we will be excommunicated by her, and the Church of England will become herself a false church. If the Church of Rome be a false church then, she cannot be a pure source of apostolic succession; and the Church of England must be false, because she derived her ordination and sacraments from that of Rome." Here is a dilemma for the various tribes of regular succession schemers of every hue and grade. Let them choose which horn they please, and hold their *succession honors if they can!!*

The idea that these men are the sole conductors of the Heavenly Galvanism, and that all who will be Divinely galvanized must come within the

reach of their magic voice; and that those alone are qualified to impart a shock who have been magnetized by the imposition of their hands upon their heads, is too preposterous even for this age of Spirit-rapping, novel inventions and quackery.

The most popular preacher in the world this moment is Mr. Spurgeon, a young Baptist Minister not yet 24 years of age—a man of limited education, but possessed of such extraordinary oratorical powers as to assemble 10,000 people on a week day to listen to his instructions. His wonderful success among all ranks, but especially among the poor, has led Dr. Tait, the present Bishop of London, to engage Exeter Hall as a place of preaching on the Sabbath evenings, for the working classes. The Bishop of Carlisle has already preached in the Hall, and the Bishop of Ripon, and Deans, Canons, and many eminent Ministers of the Church of England are announced as preachers for many successive Sabbath evenings. The Puseyite party have been aroused by this innovation of Church Dignitaries preaching in an *unconsecrated hall*, as if stones and wood were possessed of holiness; and Lord Dun-gannon brought a complaint against the Bishop of London for permitting such irregularity, before the House of Lords. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of London and Lord Kin-naird defended the preaching in the Hall, and their speeches were received with great cheering by the House.

The Archbishop of Canterbury lately invited a party of christian friends to his palace at Lambeth, among whom were Sir Culling Eardley an Independent, the Rev. Dr Steane a Baptist, and the Rev. W. Bunting, a Methodist. During the meeting the Bishop of Ripon offered prayer, the Rev. Dr Steane gave an address, and the Rev. W. Bunting concluded with prayer. What will our puseyite gentry, some of whom are afraid to enter a Methodist Chapel during the funeral service of an esteemed Minister, say to Baptist speaking and Methodist praying in the palace of the highest dignitary of the Church of England?

Puseyism is dying out in the mother country, and afraid of falling into deeper disgrace and contempt, it is now seeking shelter in the Colonies, hoping to find a refuge among the scattered population of districts that have enjoyed but little cultivation and possessess but little discernment. But this monster requires only to be known to be abhored; its ridiculous and presumptuous pretensions will meet with little favour from the hardy, active and enterprising inhabitants of our American possessions, whose increasing knowledge and growing independence altogether unfit them to be the victims of a system so marked by deception and mockery as Puseyism—a system which the good Bishop M'Ilvaine describes as one “ of Church instead of Christ; Priest instead of Gospel; concealment of truth, instead of manifestation of

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the truth ; ignorant superstition instead of enlightened faith ; bondage when we are promised liberty,—all tending to load us with whatever is odious in the worst meaning of priest-craft, in the place of the free, affectionate, enlarging, elevating and cheerful liberty of the children of God."

There have been at different periods, and in very superstitious communities, some ignorant and presuming persons who have taken upon themselves to assume the office of prophet, announcing themselves as heaven-called and heaven-sent messengers of God, who have assumed an authority far exceeding that claimed by the most arrogant of modern clergymen, and who have put forth pretensions that throw even Puseyites into the shade,—but their race has always been short, and their influence limited and transient.

The Mormon imposture is the most imposing of this class in modern times, and were its monstrous assumptions and vile abominations made known to the public, even in connection with those scriptural truths which they have craftily introduced into their system, they would never have one solitary accession to their ranks.

The revival of an order of Evangelists under a new character, with all the powers of the Apostles, only lacking the most important, the power of working miracles which constituted their *Credentials*, in an issue of a recent date, on

which the claimants to this office pretend to be called by Christ, sent by Him to preach, to be invested by Christ with power over Churches, Deacons and Pastors, having authority to call all to account, and to judge all and reprove all, while they at the same time are amenable to no tribunal on earth, and having no conceivable credentials to make good their pretensions or prove their authority. Their own bare word, and the conceit of their own minds is all that they attempt to plead as the ground on which they rest their claims to these high prerogatives. This out-popes the pope, for that functionary is elected by the College of Cardinals, and has received regular ordination in his previous stations, but these claimants of new evangelistic honors set all elections and previous qualifications aside, and vault at once into the throne of supreme ecclesiastic domination. They receive no authority from any predecessors; no ordination from men, all is *within*—and *invisible* to mortals—and would remain for ever unknown, were we not startled by the wonderful assumptions of these self-appointed evangelists. They are a race of mystics—like those of whom the old Jurists said “*privilegium personale personam sequitur, et cum personâ extinguitur.*” *

* A personal privilege follows the person, and is abolished with the person.

We know of nothing approaching this novelty with the exception of the early Baptists of Virginia, who in one year elected Samuel Harris, John Waller, and Elijah Craig to be Apostles, and these three were actually ordained to the apostolic office by the Association. After one year this novel position was abandoned; and we believe this new order of Evangelists is destined to meet a similar fate. The light, the independence and christian faithfulness of the churches will correct the mistaken and punish the presumptuous in this matter.

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II.

THE CREED OF THE CHURCH OF GOD.

To suppose that God, who loved the church and redeemed it with his own precious blood, would leave us in this world of distraction and trial, without any certain rule to guide us amidst its many perplexities, would be to fasten the charge of a want of wisdom or benevolence on the Most High. But he lacks neither. He is infinite in both: and He has given us that Scripture which "is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," 2 Tim. iii. 16, 17.

THE WORD OF GOD IS THE ONLY AND THE ALL-SUFFICIENT RULE OF HIS CHURCH, AND AUTHORITATIVELY PRESCRIBES THE TRUTH WHICH WE ARE TO BELIEVE, THE ORDINANCES WHICH WE ARE TO OBSERVE, AND THE DUTIES WHICH WE ARE TO PRACTICE. This is the law of the house of God. The sixth article of the Church of England asserts that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," and Archdeacon Welchman, in his work on the Articles, says: "The Holy Scriptures contains all

things which relate either to faith or practice, beyond which God requires nothing of us ;" and, after confirming this truth by an appeal to Scripture, and quotations from the writings of Ignatius, Bishop of the church in Antioch, and Irenæus, Bishop of the church in Lyons, from Tertullian and Cyprian, he contends that God alone, who has power to confer salvation, has the right to prescribe its conditions, and that he has declared the Scriptures to be *sufficient* for that end. John Jewell, who died in 1571, the illustrious Bishop of Salisbury, and one of the most learned of the Reformers, in his *Apology for the Church of England*, which was originally written in Latin, and was translated into English by Lady Ann Bacon—a work which was admired by the Reformers of Germany and Switzerland equally with those of Great Britain—after quoting 2 Tim., iii., 16, 17, says : "Thus did the holy fathers fight against the heretics *with none other force than the Holy Scriptures.*" He refers to the famous remark of Augustine in his controversy with an opponent—"Let not these words, *I say* or *you say*, be heard between us; let us speak in this wise—*Thus saith the Lord. THEN LET US SEEK THE CHURCH.*" He reasons on the sufficiency of the Scriptures, and asks the Roman Catholics, "Why they do not convict and master them by the Holy Scriptures? It is God's cause, why are they doubtful to commit it to the trial of God's

Word? What manner of men be they who fear the judgment of the Holy Scriptures—that is, the judgment of God himself; and who, to maintain their own traditions, have defaced and corrupted now these many hundred years, the ordinances of Christ and his Apostles.” Dr Stillingfleet, Bishop of Worcester, declares “that we ought to believe nothing as an article of faith, but what God has revealed, and the complete revelation of God’s will to us is contained in the Bible.” He asserts that there is no necessity for negative articles of faith, and that he rejects everything not contained in our only rule of faith, and that he most firmly believes the Scriptures to be THE ONLY RULE OF FAITH. On this noble and christian testimony of the learned Doctor, Thomas de Laune, who perished in prison with about 8000 protestant dissenters in the reign of Charles II, in his plea for the non-conformists, published at Cambridge, 1779, observes, “What could have been spoken with fuller evidence, and greater demonstration of truth? On this single point stands the whole controversy of separation: as to the constitution of their churches, that nothing is lawful in the worship of God but what he has expressly commanded. On this account, the dissenters with Bishop Stillingfleet, reject the Pope’s supremacy, transubstantiation, purgatory, the infallibility of the church of Rome, &c.; and on the same account do they reject all national, provincial and diocesan

churches, also the government of the Church of Christ by lords, archbishops, deans, archdeacons, curates, &c. and all liturgies and litanies, bowings and crossings, and fasts and feasts, because not one word of any of them, is found in our only rule of faith. Therefore Christ having in the affirmative completely revealed to us His mind and will in the Bible, both as to the doctrine and discipline of His Church, we need not to go to pope, council or tradition, or to any other for additions to either, or trouble ourselves to make negative articles of faith, which would be as ridiculous as they would be endless."

The excellent and devout Bishop Beveridge, in his *Private Thoughts*, solemnly declares his belief that the Holy Scriptures "contain a perfect and complete rule of faith and manners—that they are an eternal treasury of Divine knowledge, whereby all that sincerely believe in Christ may be sufficiently instructed as well as thoroughly furnished unto every good word and work. And whatever it hath pleased His Sacred Majesty to insert therein, I believe it is my duty to believe; and whatever He has been pleased to command, I believe it is my duty to perform."

The late archdeacon Daubeny, of Bath, in his *guide to the church*, though a high-churchman, speaks like a christian and a reformation, "Religion as coming from God, must be perfect, and can receive no improvement from the wit of man." The reformation of religion does not consist in

modernizing its profession, by an accommodation of it to prevailing opinions ; but in restoring it to its primitive standard. God has revealed himself ; and all that he has spoken, and consequently all that is demanded of us to accede to, is declared in **ONE Book** ; from which nothing is to be retrenched, and to which nothing can be added. *There is an establishment for the government and doctrine of the church of Christ, founded on Divine Revelation, and confirmed by Apostolic practice.*"

William Chillingworth, fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford, sometime a Roman Catholic, and a resident at the College of St. Omers, and one of the noblest champions of the sufficiency of the Scriptures that ever wielded a pen in the cause of truth, gives us the results of his long and thorough investigation into the great questions connected with the English Reformation. "After a long and impartial search of the true way of happiness, I do plainly profess, that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but upon this rock (the Bible) only. I see plainly with mine own eyes, that there are popes against popes, councils against councils, fathers against others, and the same fathers against themselves, a consent of fathers of one age against a consent of fathers of another age, the church of one age against the church of another age. In a word, there is no sufficient certainty, but of scriptures only, for any considering man to build upon. This therefore and this only, have I reason to believe. Accord-

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ing to this I will live, and for this, if there be oc-
casion, I will not only willingly but even gladly
lose my life. I am fully assured that God does
not, and therefore man ought not to require any
more of any man than this, to believe the scrip-
ture to be God's word, to endeavour to find the
true sense of it, and to live according to it."

"By the religion of Protestants," he says, "I
do not understand the doctrine of Luther, Calvin,
or Melanchthon; nor the confession of Augsбурgh
or Geneva; nor the catechism of Heidelberg; nor
the Articles of the Church of England; no, nor
the harmony of Protestant confessions; but that
wherein they all agree, and which they all sub-
scribe, with a greater harmony as a perfect rule
of their faith and actions, that is THE BIBLE. The
BIBLE, I SAY THE BIBLE ONLY, IS THE RELIGION OF
PROTESTANTS. Whatever else they believe besides,
they may hold as a matter of *opinion*,* but as a

* There is a wide difference between *faith* and *opinion*, and it is of some importance clearly to distinguish the one from the other. Matters of faith are truths or facts which are accompanied with such evidence as puts doubt beyond all question, or are testified by witnesses in whose veracity and competency we can place the fullest confidence. They are all fixed and certain. Matters of opinion are inferences drawn from circumstances, from pre-
mises that may be somewhat doubtful or insufficient; and these may be correct, or they may be far from the truth. An uncer-
tainty always attaches itself to our opinions. This is the grand error of Historic orthodoxy; it confounds itself with truth, mis-
taking dogmatism for revelation, and the theologies of man for
the religion of God. Unity of faith is thus confounded with
oneness of opinion; and men spend their strength in vainly
attempting to realize a Scriptural unity by the employment of
means and measures as much opposed to the nature of man as
they are subversive of the very end desired.

matter of faith and religion, neither can they with coherence to their own grounds, believe it themselves, nor require the belief of it of others, without most high and most schismatical presumption!"

The sufficiency and authority of the word of God, were the foundation of the great reformation in Great Britain and on the continent of Europe; and it is somewhat remarkable, that creeds and confessions of faith should so speedily find a place among those who acknowledge the word of God as the only perfect rule of faith and practice, and "Jesus Christ as the one infallible, authoritative legislator and governor of his church,—the Lord, and only lord of conscience; and that nothing should be adopted and practised inconsistent with His revealed will, and nothing that he hath enjoined should be omitted by those who profess allegiance to Him." *

The early Christians had no creed but the Word of God for more than 300 years. There is, says Mosheim, "a brief summary of Christian doctrines, called the Apostles' Creed, and which, from the fourth century onward, was attributed to Christ's ambassadors themselves; but at this day all who have any knowledge of antiquity, confess unanimously, that this opinion is a mistake, and has no foundation." Dr. Isaac Bar-

* Rev. John Newton, Rector, St. Mary, Woolnoth, London.

row says, in his exposition of this creed, “That it was compiled by joint advice, or by particular contributions of all the apostles, *is a conceit* sustained by very weak grounds, and assailed by very strong objections; it is nowhere mentioned in the *Apostolic Acts*, that it was not received by all churches; and that those who used the substance thereof, were so bold as to alter and enlarge it; but that which amounts almost to a demonstration against it is that the most ancient are wholly ignorant of it, or did not rely upon it as authoritative.” It is certain that this formula had no place as an authoritative expression of doctrine in the primitive church. It savours nothing of the philosophy of the Schools, and the substance of which is found in the works of the earliest fathers, but not in the form in which it stands in modern publication. Bull, Pearson, and Bingham have admitted, as the creed of the *Alexandrian church*, that formulary which Arius and his friend laid before the Emperor Constantine; but which is evidently the philosophical formulary of that learned party, and not a historical or baptismal epitome. Neander, Rothe, Hagenbach and Bunsen, have completely destroyed the false patchwork of certain superficial writers on the antiquity of creeds, and thrown out as forgeries the so-called liturgies of St. James, St. Peter and St. Mark, which were added to the eight books of the constitution, after the council of Ephesus,

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A. D. 431. Bunsen observes, on the authority of the Coptic baptismal canons, that the Apostles' Creed according to the 7th book of the Apostolic Constitutions, is not an historical but a scholastic formulary; that it is neither Arian nor Athanasian, and may be regarded as expressive of the learned consciousness of the church about the middle of the third century.

From a pretty extensive examination of the subject of Creeds, we come to the conclusion that there is no shadow of evidence of the existence of any authoritative regular human creed till the 4th century, when the Council of Nice assembled by the command of the Emperor Constantine, A. D. 325, for the express purpose of arresting the progress of the opinions of Arius, a presbyter of Alexandria. This assembly of 318 bishops settled the creed or standard of doctrines which the churches were to believe, and thus began that great apostacy which ultimately deprived the greater portion of Christendom of the Word of God. After this new creeds multiplied on all sides, for though Arius was banished, yet he had a strong party, and new modifications and editions of the creed were continually appearing, so that Hilary the bishop of Poictiers, who flourished in the 4th century, blames Constantine the Emperor, for the variety and contrariety of those creeds that were made after the council of Nice: "you feign yourself to be a christian, and

you are the enemy of Jesus Christ; you are Anti-Christ and have begun his work: you intrude into the office of procuring new creeds to be made, and you live like a pagan. It is a thing equally deplorable and dangerous that there are as many creeds as there are opinions among men, as many doctrines as inclinations, and as many sources of blasphemy as their faults among us; BECAUSE WE MAKE CREEDS ARBITRARILY, AND EXPLAIN THEM AS ARBITRARILY. And as there is but one faith, so there is but one only God, one Lord and one baptism. We renounce this one faith, when we make so many different creeds; and that diversity is the reason why we have no true faith among us. We cannot be ignorant that since the Council of Nice we have done nothing but made creeds. And while we fight against words, litigate upon new questions, dispute about equivocal terms, complain of authors, that every one may make his own party triumph, while we cannot agree; while we anathematize one another, there is hardly one that believes in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless it is for these creeds about invisible mysteries that we calumniate one another, not for our belief in God." Here we see the natural consequence of the creed-making power—it is a work of the flesh and of the devil, and must bring forth its appropriate fruit in hatred, jealousy, and devouring, the one of the other.

This creed was confirmed by the Council of Constantinople, which met A. D. 382, and consisted of 150 bishops under the Emperor Theodosius. The Council of Ephesus A. D. 431, under Pope Celestine I; and the Council of Chalcedon A. D. 451, under Pope Leo I, confirmed the same creed,—which was also declared to be the true faith by the Council of Trent which met in December 1545, and January and February, 1546.

It is not necessary to say much about the Athanasian creed, as all whose opinion is entitled to respect agree that it was not written by Athanasius at all; and Waddington, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, and author of a History of the Church, says "It was composed many centuries after the times of the Apostles, in a very corrupt age of a corrupt church, and composed in so much obscurity that the very pen from which it proceeded is not certainly known." So unfounded are its claims, that the Episcopal churches in the United States have rejected it altogether. It has been the cause of many useless and unprofitable controversies.

Creedism springs from a denial of the sufficiency of Scripture; the doctrine of the puseyites, and all protestants, who like the Lutheran School of Pennsylvania, of which Dr Schaff is the head, hold that christianity was gradually developed in ages succeeding the apostolic times—a cockatrice

egg, which, when hatched, will produce nothing but vipers !!! Human Creeds and Scholastic Theology are the creatures of an Ecclesiastical power, and can only be brought forth in a degenerate age. They are used as tests and terms of church membership and ministerial orthodoxy, and though adopted at first as a summary or abridgment of the doctrine and practice of churches, they soon cease to be so regarded, and acquire an authoritative character. They possess no Divine authority, as there is no warrant for their manufacture. They are a direct invasion of the prerogatives of Christ, and an insult to infinite wisdom. Were they necessary, Jesus would have made one himself, or directed the apostles to do so, and not left any body or every body that possessed sufficient presumption and daring to legislate for His church. It is no excuse to assert that the different circumstances of the church rendered this necessary. The Lord who knows all things, the end from the beginning, saw all the changes that were to take place in the church and in the world; he foretold the apostacy, and had a creed been necessary to prevent schism and heal divisions, He would doubtless have commanded the apostles, his inspired ambassadors, to make such an epitome of truth as would have answered the purpose. The fact that He has not done so, is proof sufficient that He did not think it the best mode, or a necessary

thing; and this is enough to check the presumption of those men who attempt to improve what infinite wisdom has pronounced perfect, and exalt the fallible opinions and miserable patchwork of poor, sinful, erring mortals, to a level with the master-piece of the manifold wisdom of the infallible and Eternal God!

The fact that they are human, and consequently of no authority, renders them powerless in forming the opinion of thinking men; while from the masses of the unreflecting, they receive a homage and a veneration which belong only to that which is perfect and Divine.

Bishop Burnet in his history of the Reformation, attributes the rise of the Baptists in Germany, to their carrying out the principles of Luther respecting the sufficiency of scripture, and the right of private judgment; and catholic writers agree with this, when they call Luther the father of the German Baptists, and say that when he persecuted them, "he let out the life of his own cause." *

In a letter addressed to the learned Erasmus,—written from Bohemia, it is said, "that the followers of Huss received no rule of faith but the Bible."

Roger Williams, the friend of Cromwell and Milton, a regularly ordained clergyman of the Episcopal church, who held a parish in the West

* Robinson's Eccles. Researches, p. 543.

of England, and who joined the Puritans of New England, but afterwards became a Baptist, and formed the First Baptist Church in America, in March, 1639, was the first in modern times to make known and expound the grand doctrine of liberty of conscience. He appears to have been animated by the spirit of the farewell address of the truth loving Robinson of Leyden, who charged the first Puritans who sailed for New England, "before God and the blessed angels, to follow me no further than you have seen me follow Christ; if God shall reveal *any thing to you by any other instrument of his*, be as ready to receive it as you were to receive any truth by my ministry; for I am verily persuaded that He has *more truth* yet to break forth out of His holy word. For my part, I cannot sufficiently bewail the condition of the Reformed Churches, which are come to a period in religion, and will go at present no further than the instruments of their reformation. The Lutherans can not be drawn to go beyond what Luther saw; whatever part of His will our God has revealed to Calvin, they will rather die than embrace it, and the Calvanists you see, stick fast where they were left, by that great man of God who yet saw not all things. But take heed what you receive as truth,—examine it, consider it, and compare it with other scriptures, before you receive it, *for it is not possible that the christian world should come so lately out of such*

thick anti-christian darkness, and that full perfection of knowledge should break forth at once."

The amiable Robinson had no idea of confining any of his brethren to a human creed; he thinks it impossible that the christians in his day, could have perfection of knowledge, and he urges them to seek *more light* and not confine themselves to the truth that other men—even the greatest of reformers—may have arrived at. The great Milton appears to have cherished similar sentiments, who was denounced by Dr. Featly as a pestilent ana-baptist, and summoned before the House of Lords in 1664 to give an account of his principles. In his *Areopagitica*, published in London in the same year, he represents the truth as the grand object of pursuit to all noble and aspiring minds, and intimates the necessity of every one using his utmost diligence in the search, and the folly of any age or nation, imagining that they have reached perfection, and have no further need for exertion or inquiry.

"Truth," he says, "came once into the world with her Divine Master, and was a perfect shape, most glorious to look upon; but when He ascended, and his apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who, as that story goes of that wicked *Typhon* with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris, took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into

* Neal's History, vol. i, page 440.

a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time, ever since the friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search which Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down gathering every link still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall till her master's second coming. He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection."

Milton was a student of Christ's College, Cambridge, and originally intended for the church, but his exalted ideas of the sufficiency and supremacy of the Scriptures, his love of freedom in its widest and highest sense, and his cherished hope of realizing a nobler condition of humanity, for which he thirsted and labored, formed in him so deep an aversion to all human articles and creeds, that he could not subscribe them, as such an act required "*an accommodating conscience*;" so he abandoned the idea, and devoted his life to the discovery and advancement of freedom and truth. The love of reform kindled the zeal of his youth in the cause of liberty, and kept alive the hope that cheered his declining years. His work on Christian Doctrine, proves him to be a baptist and a reformer in religion as well as in politics.

It is no matter of surprise that Roger Williams, the friend of such a man as Milton, should have a

strong desire for a more enlarged acquaintance with truth; and that the church of which he was the first preacher, and humanly speaking the founder, should repudiate all human shackles and take the word of God as their only rule of doctrine and practice. Of this church, the First in America, in Providence, Rhode Island, "from first to last, the Bible, without comment, has been the only confession of faith."*

My esteemed friend and brother the Rev. Dr. Hague, of Albany, delivered an elaborate discourse at the second centennial celebration of the anniversary of this church, in 1839, he being then pastor of the First Baptist Church in Providence, in which he pays a just tribute to the character of Roger Williams, and other distinguished early pioneers in the cause of religious reform, says, that a number of believers in Jesus, united in his name, and agreeing to walk together in obedience to his commandments, would "have *from his word*, as much authority for their acts as a church, as they would have if His personal presence were revealed among them, and they were to receive a commission directly from his lips. A church thus united *would be bound to take His word as their rule*, to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded them; to appoint their Bishops and Deacons, and to do every thing decently and in order; and would thus exemplify

* Benedict's history of the Baptists, vol. i, page 487.

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the great principle that **SUCCESSION ARISES FROM ORDER, AND NOT ORDER FROM SUCCESSION.**" †

Roger Williams was thus honored to lay the foundation of a denomination in America who like himself should "stand alone for truth against the whole world," of whom General Washington said in one of his letters, "they have been throughout America, uniformly and almost unanimously, the firm friends of civil liberty, and the persevering promoters of our glorious revolution." *

The Baptists, when they cease to be the advocates of true genuine reform, act the part of traitors to their own cause and their own principles, and have departed from the grounds of constitutional liberty which form the basis of civil and religious freedom.

The Baptists in Virginia were entirely free from all creeds and articles till the year 1783, when they adopted the Philadelphia Confessions, *with certain alterations*, as their standard. In doing so they distinctly proclaimed that this symbol "should not usurp any tyrannical power over the consciences of any," and that they "did not mean that every person is to be bound to the strict observance of every thing contained in it, nor did they intend to make it, (the Creed) su-

† See Historical discourse, page 31.

* Benedict, vol. ii. p. 481.

erior or equal to the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice." †

In Scotland the Independent and Baptist churches have always repudiated all articles as an unwarranted assumption upon the freedom and intelligence of an age of Christian light and civilization; and the Baptist Union of Scotland have long since adopted as their motto, not as their creed "God loves all—Christ died for all—the Spirit strives with all." And the English correspondent of the New York Chronicle, in the issue of July 4th of the present year, after referring to the numbers of Baptist churches who do not join the associations, says of these bodies, "We have no legislative power. We pass resolutions, but their adoption or rejection is entirely with the churches. No interference (that is with the churches,) is tolerated; the attempt would raise a rebellion."

The Free Will Baptists hold "the Scriptures as their only Rule of Faith and Practice, to the exclusion of all written Creeds, Covenants, Rules of Discipline and Articles of Organization." This Body was founded in America in 1780, at New Durham, New Hampshire, by Elder Benjamin Randall. It numbers about 60,000 members in full communion.

† Address delivered before the American Baptist Historical Society, in New York, on the 10th of May, 1856, by the Rev. R. B. C. Howell, D.D.

The BEREANS, founded by Mr Barclay, a Scotch Clergyman at Edinburgh, in 1773, imitate the Ancient Bereans mentioned in Acts xvii, 11, and build "their faith and practice upon THE SCRIPTURES ALONE, WITHOUT REGARD TO ANY HUMAN AUTHORITY WHATEVER."

The Lutherans hold "That the Holy Scriptures are the only source whence we are to draw our religious sentiments, whether they relate to faith or practice."

The Calvanistic Baptists in America, according to the declaration of the Baptist Convention of New Hampshire, believe the "Scriptures to be the true centre of Christian Union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds and opinions are to be tried."

The CHRISTIANS, a body formed in America, about 1800, by large secessions from the Methodists in North Carolina and Virginia, from the Presbyterians in Kentucky and from the Calvinistic Baptists in New England. They are Baptists, and number above 100,000 communicants, and reject all human Creeds and articles of faith, believing that the Scriptures are an all-sufficient guide, and the only rule of Christian faith and practice.

The DISCIPLES OF CHRIST or the REFORMERS* are a large and influential body of Christians

* Called Campbellites by vulgar people.

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in America, who were gathered from various denominations, principally by the labours of Alexander Campbell, the President of Bethany College, in Virginia. He and his father Thomas Campbell left the Presbyterian Church and were baptized in the year 1812, and in 1813, they and the congregations which they had formed, "united with the Red-stone Baptist Association; protesting against all human Creeds as bonds of union, and professing subjection to the Bible alone." They inscribed upon their banners "Faith in Jesus as the true Messiah, and OBEDIENCE to Him as our Lawgiver and King, the ONLY TEST of christian character, and the only bond of Christian union, communion and co-operation, irrespective of all creeds, opinions, commandments and traditions of men." They are opposed to all creeds "from a conviction that whether the opinions in them be true or false, they are hostile to the union, peace, harmony, purity and joy of Christians, and adverse to the conversion of the world to Jesus Christ." They therefore take "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible, as the foundation of all christian union and communion."

They are a large and daily increasing body, and already number above Two HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND regular communicants.

President Campbell has been much misrepresented as it regards his doctrine, by men of

extreme views, by bigoted sectarians, and by clerical upstarts, whose ridiculous assumptions and silly pretensions he exposes and condemns with a master hand. His character no one has ever attempted to assail. His eminent purity of life, catholicity of spirit, and deep benevolence of character are well established, being known to hundreds of thousands, for more than half a century; but some envious clerical spirits in this Island, have charged him with denying the *personality* and *influences* of the Holy Spirit. Let the able President of Bethany College, the hero of many battles, whom all admit "to be a man of talents, and of considerable learning,"* speak for himself. He believes in the distinct personality of the Holy Spirit, equally with that of the Father and the Son, and declares that the Spirit of God is "a LIVING, ENERGIZING, ACTIVE, PERSONAL EXISTENCE;" — and that in ALL the works of God, "the Spirit of God is the active, operating agent," † So firmly does Mr. Campbell believe in the Influences of the Holy Spirit, that he says "THAT THE INFLUENCES OF THE HOLY SPIRIT ARE AS NECESSARY TO THE NEW LIFE, AS THE ATMOSPHERE IS TO OUR NATURAL LIFE IN THE KINGDOM OF NATURE." He says that "WE

* Dr N. L. Rice, of the Presbyterian church in Paris, Kentucky, with whom President Campbell held a debate of eighteen days in 1843.

† Campbell's Christian System, p. 24.

ARE BEGOTTEN, AND BORN BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD," that "THE POURING OUT OF THE INFLUENCES, AND THE RENEWING OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, are necessary to the salvation of the soul and the enjoyment of the hope of Heaven, and "that the Holy Spirit is shed on us richly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; of which the peace of mind, the love, the joy, and the hope of the regenerate is full proof; for these are among the fruits of that Holy Spirit of promise of which we speak." Again he says "a new spirit, a new heart, and an outward character, corresponding to this change, are the effects of the regenerating process; the Spirit of God is the spirit of love, and every pulsation of the new heart, is the impulse of the spirit of love. Feeling himself a son and an heir of God, he cultivates the temper, spirit and behaviour which correspond with so exalted a relation. The law of God is hid in his heart; as the thirsty hart pants after the brooks of water, so pants his soul after God. He lives to God, and walks with Him. This is that change of heart and life and character which is the tendency and fruit of the process of regeneration." Such are the sentiments of Alexander Campbell as published in the 4th edition of the Christian System in 1857. Ignorant, dishonest, or wicked must be the man who in the face of such testimony, will propagate the falsehood, that President Campbell denies the personality

and influences of the Spirit, and in fact all true religion, a change of heart, and christian experience.

The Evangelical Union, formed about twelve years ago in Scotland, by Seceders from the Presbyterians and the Independents, hold no creed but the Bible, and no rule of faith but the living Oracles of the living God.

In the justly celebrated Theological Institution at Andover, in the United States, a Seminary belonging to the Congregationalists, every Professor on the day of his Inauguration, publicly declares and subscribes the declaration "That he believes that the Word of God contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament is the ONLY PERFECT RULE of faith and practice."

There are many distinguished Educators in Europe and America who hold the same views, though they are not called publicly to avow them on entering upon the duties of a Professor in any of the Universities. Among these are Alexander Campbell the President of Bethany College, Virginia, the HONORABLE HORACE MANN, the President of Antioch College, JAMES SHANNON LL.D. the President of the Christian University, and CHARLES LOUIS LOOS, the President of Eureka College, and one of the ablest thinkers, and one of the most accurate and reliable writers of the age.

The Rev. John Angel James of Birmingham,

the author of the *Anxious Inquirer*, and one of the most liberal, generous and catholic spirits of the age, in his work on Christian fellowship, says "It is impossible for us to imagine otherwise, than that the Head of the Church arranged its government with a direct reference to its purity and peace, and that the system He has laid down is the best calculated to promote these ends. Hence, then, it is obviously our duty to enquire what that system is, not merely for its own sake, but for the sake of the interests of Evangelical piety. The error of viewing the subject of church government as a mere abstract question, is very common, and has tended more than any thing else with many persons, to lead them to regard it with indifference and neglect. *The acknowledgment of no other rule of faith and practice than the Word of God, must tend to exalt the only infallible standard of truth and the only Divine means of sanctity.*"

The celebrated **TERTULLIAN**, who flourished towards the end of the second and in the beginning of the third century, in his eloquent apology for the Christians, presented to the Governors of Proconsular Africa, says "That the *Rule of Truth* is that which proceeds from Christ, and was transmitted by his companions; and all those different heretical teachers will be proved to be somewhat later than those Apostles. Every thing which is written against the truth

is formed after the model of the truth, the imitation being effected by the operation of the spirit of error." *

Creeds prevent the very thing they are intended to accomplish. They contain opinions which their framers pronounce subordinate and secondary, but it is a fact, that these subordinate opinions become in a short time *the main points* which distinguish one creed from another, and the very opinions that are decried as non-essentials, receive the greatest attention, and strictly because they are the grounds of difference and the causes of schism among rival and conflicting sects. They make parties and foster party spirit. They are sectarian, and have a tendency not only to attain to an equality with the Bible, but to become a test of communion and ministerial standing *exclusive of the Bible*,—and to become the standard by which the Bible is to be interpreted. We have a lamentable instance of this tendency of the creed power in the present position of the Lutheran Synods of Missouri and Buffalo, in the United States, between whom there has been a sharp controversy for some time past, on the subject of the Ministry. In a reply of the Synod of Missouri to the Synod of Buffalo, the following passage occurs.

* *Apology by Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus*, chap. xlvi.

"When you ask of us to interpret, with you, our good confession according to the scriptures, we, as Lutherans, cannot agree to the demand, and are surprised that you as Lutherans, should make such a request of us. For, as such, we have already the clear meaning, and the pure interpretation of the divine word in our ecclesiastical confession ; and only in case we had to do with those that are not Lutherans, and who had doubts, and would hesitate as to the scriptural correctness of our confession ; or if anywhere in our symbols there were anything not perfectly clear, (which, however, is not the case,) we would refer to the scriptures, and show from them the scriptural correctness of our confession.

"Lutherans, however, as such, *must not interpret their symbols by the scriptures, but the scriptures by the symbols*, and immovably hold fast to the *quia* ; for wherever we would give up the *quia*, where our symbols clearly and incontrovertibly believe, teach, and confess ; and anywhere inclined ourselves to accept the *quatenus*, we should then give up our character as Lutherans, and place ourselves into the ranks of rationalists, that insist on the *quatenus*, which form of acknowledgment applies very well to the decrees of the Tridentine Council, or of the Synod of Dort, and the like, but not to *our confession.*"

Here is the true creed faith, in its own honest, decided and uncompromising rigidity. Here the

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Synod expresses its determination to hold to the distinct terms of the creed irrespective of scripture, and even to interpret the scriptures according to the decisions of the creed, instead of making the creed bend to the higher tribunal of the Word of God. It holds fast to the *quia*, (because)— and repudiates the *quatenus* that is believing the creed *as far as* it is right, or according to scripture. The Buffalo Synod rejects the Missouri view of the case entirely, and insists on bringing the creed to the test of the law and the testimony, and charges the venerable confession of Augsburg, the oldest symbol of the Protestant Reformation, called the palladium of Protestantism, which established Lutheran Orthodoxy in 1530—with being unsound, erroneous and even heretical, while a powerful and daily increasing class of Lutheran Divines and people insist upon its being purged of all its errors. Alas ! for the glory of the Augsburg confession.

The confession of faith of the Greek church drawn up in the Basilic of St. Sophia, at Constantinople, in A. D. 1054, pronounces Greek Orthodoxy to be the true faith ; the Roman Catholic creed with the additions of Pius IV, agreed to by the Council of Trent in 1563, announced Roman Catholic Orthodoxy as the true faith ; the King of England as the Supreme Governor of the church and Defender of the faith, established the 39 articles as agreed to in the convocation

at London in 1562, as the doctrine and discipline of the church and according to the Word of God, ratifying and confirming the same, and *prohibiting* the least difference from the said articles, and requiring all his loving subjects to continue in the profession of the same, as he would not endure any varying or departure from them in the least degree. Now all these, with the confession of the French Protestants, agreed to at Rochelle in 1571, and that of the Westminster Assembly, called by the Parliament in 1643, profess to get their views from the Bible, and to be in accordance with it; yet they all differ from one another, so that they cannot be drawn from the Word of God. Their creeds contradict each other; but truth is one, and the Bible is never against itself. Robert Hall justly remarks that the "Spirit of error is too subtle and volatile to be held by such chains. Whoever is acquainted with ecclesiastical history must know that public creeds and confessions have occasioned more controversies than they have composed; and that, when they ceased to be the subject of dispute, they have become antiquated and obsolete." Voltaire boasted in his day that there was not a Calvinist to be found in the city of Geneva, yet the Confession remained as the only authoritative creed of that church; and all who know anything of the controversies that have agitated the Church of England for the last half century, to say nothing of

other churches, must be satisfied with the inefficiency of creeds to procure unity of doctrine, and admire the shrewdness of Dr. Paley, the Archdeacon of Carlisle, who remarked that none were excluded by the Articles of the Church of England but Quakers, Papists and Baptists; and that of the Earl of Chatham, who said that "the Church of England had a Popish Liturgy, Calvinistic Articles and an Arminian Clergy."

How can we expect unity, when a human creed, that is of no Divine authority, and is liable to be controverted, is the standard of doctrine? We must have a standard that contains nothing indifferent, that is susceptible of no two-fold interpretations, and that contains no contradictions, and that has full authority, from which there can be no appeal, and that is Divine—the Word of God, or we need look in vain for scriptural unity. *Uniformity is not unity.* Unity in matters of opinion is as unphilosophical as it is impracticable. It would seem to set at defiance all the modifications, and destroy all the distinctions of intelligent and discriminating minds. But true unity is that of the spirit, the work of the truth, found only in living union with Christ, in that knowledge of the truth which will lead us to love the truth, as Coleridge says, "for the truth's sake," and to walk in the light, as the Apostle John tells us, so that we may have fellowship one with another, which is true unity.

This is the instinct of our religion, for we are taught of God to love one another.

We are glad that the old landmarks of different religious bodies are being tried by the Word of God, and that, while the Oxford Puseyites claim for Catholic tradition the office of "Authoritative Teacher,"* and pronounce it to be "infallible as the written word,"† the intelligent and pious throughout the land are becoming more alive to the value of the living Word of God. Its sufficiency, independent of all creeds and articles, is the watchword of reform in all religious communities,—and large and daily increasing bodies in Europe and America take it as their only creed. The celebrated Dr. Augustus Neander, the best ecclesiastical historian of this age, says: "I go along with those who oppose 'Creed Believers,' because I could not subscribe to any of the existing symbols (creeds—except the Apostle's Creed, which testifies to those fundamental facts of Christianity, which are essential to the existence of the Christian Church) as an unconditional expression of my religious convictions."

Dr. Richard Fuller, one of the most eloquent and influential Baptist Ministers in America, contends for the Bible alone, as the creed of Baptists. In the *Tennessee Baptist*, of Nov. 1st, 1851, an

* Newman's Lectures on Romanism.

† Keble's Sermons.

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Address is published that Dr. Fuller delivered in the city of Baltimore, when he baptized Dr. Coles, in which he repudiates all articles and standards but the Bible alone, as the creed of the Baptists, and from which we take the following extracts:

"As to the rule of faith and practice, our sentiments are not the sentiments of our brethren of other communions. True, all Protestants profess to adopt the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible. In theory, also, they allow every man the right of private judgment. All this, however, is often only profession and theory.

"Everywhere around us, we see people who condemn the Roman Catholic doctrine, that the church is the sole proprietor of the word of God, and who yet adopt the same error. What is it but Protestant Romanism when the people are required to receive humanly framed creeds and articles and confessions? When, instead of being exhorted to search the Scriptures for themselves, they are expected to surrender their consciences to their pastors, and take on credit the dogmas of a church?

"We protest against this system of binding chains upon the human intellect. The more we study the New Testament, the more do we feel and admire its fullness, its simplicity, its ample-
ness; and the deeper and more earnest is the emphasis with which we say to all human teachers and systems, Stand out of our way! Com-

pared with this volume and its life-giving words, how poor, and mean, and pitiful, are all the abstractions of creed-makers.

"To adopt human creeds, and demand conformity to them *as creeds*—to make them, and not the Bible, the test of orthodoxy, and the terms of fellowship—this is to usurp a power delegated by God to no man, or body of men. It is to supersede the Scriptures, and arrogate the very infallibility which we condemn in the church of Rome.

"It is justly regarded as a mockery when the Roman Catholic is allowed to read the Bible, but is forbidden to put any construction upon God's word, except that which the church dictates. And who sees not there is the same servility to man, the same surrender of conscience, the same stultification of reason demanded, when one is exhorted to search the Scriptures, and yet reminded of certain articles and standards prepared by beings loaded with infirmities like himself, which he must take as his guides, and to which he must adjust his faith.

"It is a singular fact with reference to creeds, that they have almost always overlooked holiness, and made piety consist in an assent to abstract, and often most metaphysical dogmas. Why have not Councils framed confessions of morals, as well as of faith? And who can doubt that much of the false religion in the churches is to be traced to this fact, that theology and not

piety, the reception of certain abstruse tenets, and not the reception of Christ, has been made the test of conversion, and the bond of fellowship.

"It is the privilege, as it must be the delight, of every Christian, to go directly to Jesus and learn of him. And whether it be priest, or church, or creed, that dares to interfere, he ought to spurn the usurpation aside. Can a maker of creeds impart instruction more clearly than the Great Teacher? The 'Scriptures are given by inspiration, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works.' If, then, the creedmaker's doctrines are true, I will find them in the Scriptures, find them without his interposition between my mind and the mind of Christ himself.

"Let it not be said, that if each individual is left to his own private judgment, there would be only discord and confusion. The reverse of this is true. God, who knows what is in man, has given a revelation which is adapted to man's nature; and if prejudice and passion were conquered, that revelation would be plain to all. It is the substitution of human articles for the word of God which has darkened the counsels of heaven, and still perpetuates party spirit, and strife, and confusion.

"An ancient writer says that 'history is philosophy teaching by example.' If the history of religion teaches us any lesson, it is this: that real piety and enduring peace are to be promoted by

fostering in every christian a just sense of that liberty of conscience, which is his most precious franchise. Whereas spiritual despotism subverts the very foundation of piety, substitutes for loyalty to truth a degrading bondage to human arrogance, and must either debase the mind under the most drivelling superstition, or exasperate it to revolt, and (as in the case with multitudes in the church of Rome,) cause it to welcome infidelity, rather than a religion which enslaves all that is noble, and tramples upon all that is most sacred in man.

"We know of no master but Jesus. We cannot consent that churches and ministers shall interpose as interpreters, between men's minds and the Great Teacher. His words are life, and we insist on hearing his words from himself as they were written by men who are inspired. These teachings are for all. They are intelligible to all. Salvation depends on our hearing and obeying the words of Christ; and we repel all efforts to divert us from Christ and his truth, and to bend us to a conformity to human opinions, articles and standards."

Dr Hersog, Ordinary Professor of Theology at Halle, in Prussia, speaks of a numerous class of Christians in America and Europe as the Reformed Baptists, whose religious principle is that nothing can be received as doctrine or precept without a "thus saith the Lord," either in ex-

press terms or clear scriptural inference. This the distinguished Professor styles HYPER PROTESTANTISM.

Dr Whately, the Archbishop of Dublin, one of the most shrewd observers and profound thinkers of the age, in his remarks on a Compendium of the Gospel, shows the evil effects of Creeds, and some substantial reasons why the Great Teacher has given us the entire Bible, and not an epitome of Christian doctrine as the creed of His church. The learned logician says "Supposing such a summary of Gospel truths had been drawn up, and could have been contrived with such exquisite skill as to be sufficient and well adapted for all, of every age and country, what would have been the probable result? It would have commanded the unhesitating assent of all christians, who would, with deep veneration, have stored up the very words of it in their memory, without any need of laboriously searching the rest of the Scriptures, to ascertain its agreement with them; which is what we do (at least are evidently *called on* to do) with a *human* exposition of the faith; and the absence of this labor, together with the tranquil security as to the correctness of their belief, which would have been thus generated, would have ended in a careless and contented apathy. There would have been no room for doubt, no call for vigilant attention in the investigation of

truth,—none of that effort of mind which is now requisite, in comparing one passage with another, and collecting instruction from the scattered, oblique, and incidental references to various doctrines in the existing scriptures; and, in consequence, none of that excitement of the best feelings, and that improvement of the heart, which are the natural, and doubtless the designed results of an humble, diligent, and sincere study of the Christian Scriptures.

In fact, all study, properly so called, of the rest of Scripture,—all lively interest in its perusal,—would have been nearly superseded by such an inspired compendium of doctrine; to which alone, as far the most convenient for that purpose, habitual reference would have been made, in questions that might arise. Both would have been regarded, indeed, as of divine authority; but the Compendium, as the fused and purified metal; the other, as the mine containing the crude ore. And the Compendium itself being not, like the existing Scriptures, that *from which* the faith is to be learned, but *the very thing to be learned*, would have come to be regarded by most with an indolent, unthinking veneration, which would have exercised little or no influence on the character. Their orthodoxy would have been, as it were, petrified, like the bodies of those animals we read of, incrusted in the ice of the polar regions; firm-fixed,

indeed, and preserved unchangable, but cold, motionless, lifeless. It is only when our energies are roused, and our faculties exercised, and our attention kept awake, by an ardent pursuit of truth, and anxious watchfulness against error,—when, in short, we feel ourselves to be doing something towards acquiring, or retaining, or improving our knowledge,—it is then only, that that knowledge makes the requisite practical impression on the heart, and on the conduct.”*

John Milton, the greatest of English poets of any age, and a profound philosopher and Theologian, repudiated all human creeds and articles as an insult to God and an injury to man. “If the Scriptures,” says this distinguished genius, “be in themselves so perspicuous and sufficient of themselves to make man wise unto Salvation, through faith—and that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works, through what infatuation is it, that even Protestant divines persist in darkening the most momentous truths of the Gospel, by stringing together all the useless technicalities and empty distinctions of scholastic barbarism, for the purpose of elucidating those Scriptures, which they are continually extolling as models of plainness. As if Scripture which possesses in itself the clearest light, and is sufficient for its own explanation, especially in matters of faith and holiness,

* *Essay on Omissions*, p. 34—37.

required to have the simplicity of its Divine truths more fully developed, and placed in a more distinct view by illustration drawn from the abstract of human Science falsely so called."*

The inefficiency, worthlessness and perverse tendencies of all human creeds and confessions of faith, are admitted by the most distinguished Ministers of the Gospel of every age and country. Newman Hall, one of the most successful and popular preachers in London, the successor of Rowland Hill and James Sherman, as pastor of the Church in Surrey Chapel, in his speech delivered in Exeter Hall, at the anniversary of the British and Foreign Bible Society, on the 1st of May of the present year, says, "The Bible teaches no theology or ism, either positive or negative, Calvinistic or Arminian, Systematic or Desultory. It teaches Christianity (that is the imitation of Jesus.) It gives not the fallible judgment of men, but the infallible Word of God."

My brethren, it becomes us to be faithful to the trust committed to us, and to labor to ascertain the precise mind of the Spirit on all matters related to His perfect and revealed will. The truth of God is adapted to promote the Divine glory, and refine, exalt and adorn all who believe and obey it; and in proportion as it is obscured or imperfectly exhibited, the grand ends of the Gospel are defeated, both as it respects the manifested glory

* See Milton's treatise on Christian Doctrine.

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of God on the one hand, and the salvation, efficiency and glorification of men on the other. And when any thing contrary to the truth is preached, the benevolent tendencies of the Gospel are counteracted, the grace of God is mantled in error, and effects the very reverse of those produced by the truth, are the result. How needful for those who stand and avow themselves the servants of God, the messengers of Christ, who have been called and sent by the Holy Spirit to teach the people, to have an accurate and distinct apprehension of the doctrines they preach—and that these doctrines be the very truths of the Bible—the mind of the Holy Spirit, for in this great and solemn service, that which is not the truth of God may be the very falsehood of the Devil !

What a noble employment is the investigation and proclamation of truth ! How lofty the exercise of reason, and how ravishing the action of the heart upon the deep and high things of God ! How vast the conceptions entertained by a mind wholly devoted to the pursuit, and capable of grasping what is great, and realizing what is grand ! Who, endowed with reason and intelligence, would hesitate about becoming the pupil of truth and the disciple of God ? And who that acknowledges the supremacy and perfection of the HOLY SPIRIT'S TEACHING, would pour contempt upon both by exalting to a level



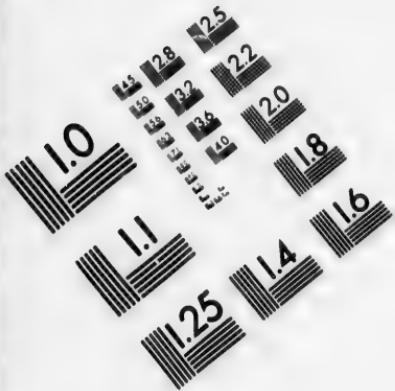
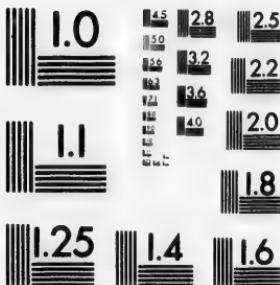


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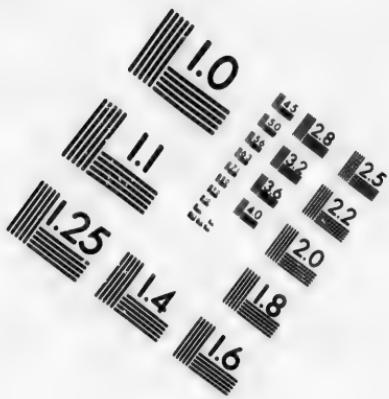


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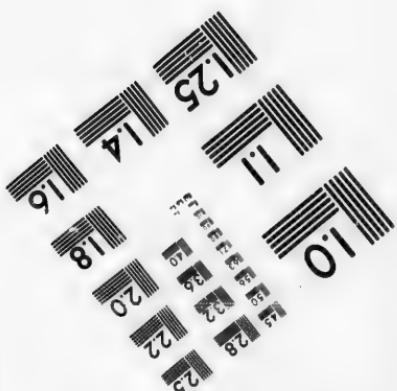


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with the Divine, a human production—a man-made creed? Who can regard such an act in any other light than that of a daring insult to the Almighty, and a deep and lasting injury to his own soul. To select a few truths from the grand storehouse of all religious knowledge, to cut, and crush and mould them into a certain form and space whose narrow limits mark the bounds which an Immortal intelligence dare not presume to pass, is as mischievous as it is unphilosophical, as full of impiety to God as it is pregnant with ruin to man. It is the fundamental principle of Anti-Christ, and of all superstition; exhibits the spirit of priestcraft and of the dark ages, and consigns us to darkness, confusion, fatal bondage and abiding decrepitude, instead of the light, order, freedom and perfection of the fulness of Christ. It is true, say they, though they enforce articles, they do not like the unblushing worshippers of the Beast or the false prophet, prohibit the Bible among their people; but they give them a creed and human articles according to which they must interpret and understand the Bible and beyond which they are not permitted to pass. They bind a chain around the neck of God's chosen, and fasten the end of it to the centre of their system, and their unfortunate captives may wander round their enclosure to the full length of their chain, and though the length, breadth and blessedness

of the whole territory of Divine truth lies open before them, they dare not pass beyond the outer circle of their system to go up and possess the land, they must be satisfied with the portion their fathers have bequeathed them, are admonished of the danger, presumption and ruin of seeking to know more then the good men that made the articles and the creed, and exhorted to show their christian humility by obeying their Minister, being satisfied with what they know and whereto they have attained, and sigh and long and pray for the happy time when their bondage shall be brought to a perpetual end, and the knowledge of the mysteries which were hidden, but are now made manifest in the Gospel, shall abound as the waters of the great deep. Or if a holy earnest child of God, whose spirit longs for deeper acquaintance with the character, will and purposes of his Heavenly Father, than the creed and articles can give, filled with enlightened zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of precious souls, panting after full conformity in spirit and life, to his exalted Lord, by striving after holiness, and filled with the lion-like courage by which the righteous are distinguished, shall cast off the fear of man which bringeth a snare, and despising the honor that cometh from men, throw aside the badge of degrading servitude, and go forth to the open word of God, traverse

its rich territories, climb its lofty heights, breathe its uncontaminated air, dwell under its cloudless sky, and feast his soul upon its living and abundant fruits, thus developing, in the full sunshine of the God of light, the hidden grandeur of his nature, until he is filled with the fulness and clothed with the perfection of Christ—he is stigmatized as a heretic who has departed from the faith, and his name, his memory and his work, surrounded with suspicion and flooded with reproach. O God of mercy ! pity and open the eyes of those professed servants of thy Son, who defame thy children for aspiring to their birth-right, and improving the privileges to which thou hast called us in Christ Jesus.

It is idle to plead the good intentions of the advocates of articles and creeds. An old writer somewhere remarks, that the way to hell is paved with them. Intentions and motives are things of the heart and known only to God; but the tendencies and consequences of any action are open to all, and are the matters with which we have to do. Now articles and creeds are wrong in themselves ; their very creation is a treasonable act, an invasion of the prerogative of the King of Zion, who is the only Lawgiver in his church ; they are a monstrous monument of human infatuation, presumption and infirmity. Their consequences are bigotry,

dissension, strife, darkness and awful deformity. They condemn men to perpetual babyhood, and doom them to subsist for a life-time on the slender provision of their early infancy. They are at variance with human freedom, with the comfort, power and progression of the soul, and the accomplishment of the grand purposes of Divine Revelation, by leading us to rest in vague, low and narrow conceptions of the noblest system of truth that challenges the admiration of the highest orders of beings.

Beloved brethren, if we would enjoy the high confidence, the lofty faith and the triumphant joy which distinguished the early Christians, we must go back to the simplicity of the first ages, and "learn to quit a subtle and disputatious theology for a religion of love, emanating from a few divinely energetic principles which pervade almost every page of Inspiration and demand, for their cordial reception and belief, nothing besides a humble and contrite heart. Reserving for ourselves the utmost freedom of thought in the interpretation of the Sacred Oracles, and pushing our inquiries as far as our opportunities admit into every department of revealed truth, we shall not dream of obtruding precarious conclusions on others as *articles* of faith, but shall receive with open arms, all who appear to love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity—and find a sufficient bond of union—

a sufficient scope for all our sympathies in the doctrine of the Cross. If the Saviour appear to be loved, obeyed and adored,—if his blood is sprinkled on the conscience, and his Spirit dwell in the heart, why should we be dissatisfied?—we who profess to be actuated by no other motive, to live to no other purpose than the promotion of his interest.” *

Let us cultivate a humble and teachable mind, an earnest, loving and obedient heart, deep and enlightened devotion to the glory of God, and fervent and scriptural charity towards all men; then shall our own souls be richly blessed with Divine grace, gladdened by the indwelling of the living Word and the promised Comforter, the Spirit of truth, and be prepared by the faith and service of the Church and the Redeemer on earth, for the nobler joys, the higher engagements and the gradually increasing glory of the General Assembly and Church in the Heavenly World.

* Rev. Robert Hall of Cambridge.

